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Several times, I've made the mistake of backing a fellow for office in hopes of landing a soft job as deputy or an honorable position as public weigher. Always turned out that the hopeful either lost the race or lost his memory.

The Republican Party did grant an appointment on the Boll Weevil Board. But as you know, the nearest cotton fields to the Shortgrass Country are 60 miles. Besides that, the next term of Congress didn't appropriate any money for boll weevil directors. So I ended up again without a government job.

Last chance I had for an inside office was after an old friend of mine quit cowboying to run the water department at Mertzon. We'd been raised on the same ranch. I figured that once he got control, I'd be his assistant. Water, you know, doesn't drop \$2 a hundredweight every day. In drouth years water consumption goes up, and after big holidays it's a might popular drink among the citizens.

But carrying a rate book weakens a friendship, like carrying a six shooter changes a sheriff, or reading a compound interests schedule hardens a banker. After I learned a water department job wasn't possible, I knew that at least my water bill would be rounded off into decent figures.

The likes of Zane Gray are the only western writers who can adequately describe the bonds of mounted men. One winter this waterman and myself had driven a herd of cows through an ice storm that'd chill a Saint Bernard dog down under his hairline. I thought it was a cinch that he wasn't going to charge me as much as he did the city folks. Was I wrong!

We had an awful row out in front of the house. I suggested that if he had to count every nitpicking thousand gallons of water, it'd only be fair that, since I had one hydrant at the stub leading from the meter to the yard, another hydrant should be hooked in on the other side of the meter.

No engineer is necessary to explain that two faucets of equal size flow at equal rates at the same pressure. The only difference in the amount of metered water and free water would be the time that I took opening the second hydrant.

His objection was unreasonable. He said, "What am I going to tell the mayor?"

Good grief, of all the simple things to say! Mayors don't want to know things like that. Nosy newspapermen are the ones who blab everything they hear or imagine. Mertzon hasn't had a newspaper in 20 years.

Besides that, I didn't intend to run a full page ad in the New York Times announcing an equal water program in Mertzon, Texas. The quieter the better. I didn't want a bunch of cranberry heads copying the idea. Citizens are happy enough, screaming and shouting at city hall about their water bills. Lots of soreheads would wither into mellow old age without a light bill or a water bill to fuss over. No way of knowing how much therapy the utility companies and water works have furnished man. Six-bits increase on a bill is a lot harder to pass than a constitutional amendment. Washington should reward the water and light men for diverting the people.

I'm still mad. He's forgotten that I gave him his first cigarette and thought him how to drink home brew without the beer backing up through his nose. All those good days are gone. In another year, He'll be wearing gloves and carrying a bunch of fountain pens in his shirt pocket. One thing about it, he's going to be mighty sorry when I quit

asking him to work at the ranch. Don't matter how big the water business is, a man never can forget the world of saddles and men.